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ABSTRACT

The context of school district governance is changing and becoming more complex. The individual roles of school board members and superintendents, and the relationship between school board members and superintendents are becoming increasingly important in light of the recent mandates for high student achievement. This brief looks at issues currently affecting school district governance. It begins with a discussion of three factors that have had significant impact on the work of local school boards in recent years: (1) discussions about the adequacy of current school governance structures; (2) the effects of state-level and federal-level accountability requirements; and (3) the increasing focus on student achievement. It then examines current thinking about the role of school boards and reviews research about effective school boards and the roles of school board members and superintendents. It concludes with some suggestions for ways in which school boards and superintendents can work toward building relationships that support district goals. These include starting with a good match, sharing a vision, developing an atmosphere of trust, and promoting professional development for board members. (WFA)

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